

Draft Memorandum for the Record

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

June 20, 2019, Meeting

10:00 AM–12:00 PM, State Transportation Building, Conference Rooms 2 and 3, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

David Mohler, Chair, representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary, and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the meetings of April 25, 2019, and May 2, 2019
- Approve the Central Transportation Planning Staff's (CTPS) State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2020 Operating Budget
- Approve the work program for the *MBTA 2020 Title VI Triennial Report*
- Approve Adjustment One to the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2019–23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 13.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Chair's Report—*David Mohler, MassDOT*

There was none.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports

There were none.

5. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—*Tegin Teich, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council*

T. Teich reported that the Advisory Council voted to submit a comment letter regarding the FFY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program. T. Teich also stated that, due to the scheduled release of the draft Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Advisory Council would meet in July and conduct its yearly field trip in August.

6. Executive Director's Report—*Scott Peterson, Co-Interim Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff*

S. Peterson stated that there would be no MPO meeting on June 27, 2019. S. Peterson also reported that the draft LRTP Needs Assessment had been posted to the MPO meeting calendar. S. Peterson encouraged board members to review the Needs Assessment and direct questions to Anne McGahan (MPO staff). MPO staff are currently conducting an air quality analysis of the recommended plan, and will post the draft LRTP prior to the next MPO meeting on July 18, 2019. The MPO board will need to discuss the correct date to hold a meeting in August in order to endorse the LRTP following a 30-day public review period.

Discussion

Tom O'Rourke (Three Rivers Interlocal Council) (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce) asked whether the cancelled visit from the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization would be rescheduled. S. Peterson replied that no new date has been identified.

7. Approval of April 25, 2019, and May 2, 2019, MPO Meeting Minutes—*Róisín Foley, MPO Staff*

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 25, 2019, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (Glenn Trindade). The motion carried.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 2, 2019, was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (G. Trindade). The motion carried.

8. CTPS SFY 2020 Operating Budget—*Paul Regan, Chair, Administration and Finance (A & F) Committee*

P. Regan stated that the A & F Committee met immediately prior to the MPO meeting. P. Regan stated that the budget will be one percent lower than the previous SFY, totaling \$620,215,000. This budget includes three percent for employee raises. P. Regan stated that the budget is largely similar to SFY 2019.

P. Regan stated that a portion of the budget would be going to capital spending for computer equipment. The new budget includes \$25,000 for college internships at CTPS. P. Regan stated that the A & F Committee voted unanimously to forward the budget to the MPO board for approval.

Vote

A motion to approve the CTPS SFY 2020 Operating Budget was made by MAPC (E. Bourassa) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (G. Trindade). The motion carried.

9. Work Program for MBTA 2020 Title VI Triennial Report—Bradley Putnam, MPO Staff

B. Putnam stated that CTPS has been assisting the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) with Title VI reporting support for a number of years. This work program, funded by the MBTA, represents the continuation of that work from July 2019 to September 2020. The budget for this project is \$139,000.

As a recipient of federal funding, the MBTA is required to issue a triennial report to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) detailing the agency's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. CTPS will conduct service monitoring and equity analyses for inclusion in the triennial report. The MBTA will submit the report to FTA by April 30, 2020.

Vote

A motion to approve the work program for the *MBTA 2020 Title VI Triennial Report* was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (G. Trindade). The motion carried.

10. Administrative Modification to the Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2019-23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)—Matt Genova, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Draft FFYs19-23 TIP Adjustment](#)

M. Genova presented Adjustment One to the FFYs 2019-23 TIP. This adjustment would reprogram an earmark for design of TIP project #606453 (Improvements on Boylston Street, from Intersection of Brookline Avenue and Park Drive to Ipswich Street in Boston) from FFY 2020 to FFY 2019. The earmark is expiring and must be programmed by the end of FFY 2019. The overall cost of the project will not change.

Discussion

Ken Miller (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA]) asked for more details on the project's design status. Jim Fitzgerald (City of Boston) (Boston Planning & Development Agency) described planned development on Boylston Street, adding that the Boston

Transportation Department project team recently met with MassDOT staff to discuss the project.

Amy Sullivan (FHWA) asked if the project's funding includes a match. D. Mohler stated that the design funding for this project is more than the earmark. Derek Krevat (MassDOT) did not know whether the earmark included a match.

Vote

A motion to approve Adjustment One to the FFYs 2019–23 TIP was made by MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (G. Trindade). The motion carried.

11. Update on Rail Vision Project—*Scott Hamwey, MassDOT*

Rail Vision is a two-year process, culminating in 2019, to identify a vision for the future of the MBTA commuter rail (CR) system so that MassDOT can begin to mobilize capital investments to more efficiently use the CR system to support transit use, equitable economic development, and housing opportunities in the region.

The project team developed seven alternatives to test a variety of tradeoffs such as electrification versus the current non-electric system, focusing service in the urban core versus better service to gateway cities and regional destinations. With the help of S. Peterson and MPO staff, these alternatives were recently modeled.

The project team began by comparing the MBTA CR system to other rail networks around the country. The MBTA CR network covers a large geographic area, with many lines that serve auto-dependent suburban and exurban communities. The team divided the system into the following station typologies:

- Inner Core Stations – Stations within the Route 128 belt that have transit supported density surrounding them. These locations often experience overcrowding at nearby rapid transit stations. In some of the alternatives, these stations could provide additional rapid transit-like service in the inner core.
- Key Stations – Key stations outside of the Route 128 belt, particularly in mid-size cities like Lowell, Lawrence, and Brockton, with the density to support a higher level of service. These stations could also support bigger park-and-ride facilities and first- and last-mile connections to serve the reverse commute market.
- Outer Stations – Stations in lower density areas. Currently, the MBTA is not programming for frequency in service in low density areas.

The team looked at how people use the service, vehicle configuration, and boarding patterns. In all of the alternatives, the team prioritized investment in high-level platforms

to facilitate more efficient boarding at all stations. Electrification of part of or the whole system is part of five of the alternatives. The team focused on two system expansion projects—the South Station expansion, and the North/South Rail Link—when considering options for increasing the frequency of service. The team researched the investment necessary to run the same amount of service in both inbound and outbound directions. Currently, the MBTA runs fewer trains in the outbound direction during the morning peak period. This is a disincentive for people to use the CR for reverse commuting. In all of the alternatives, the team wanted to balance directionality.

S. Hamwey reviewed the seven alternatives. Alternative One prioritizes balancing directionality and 30-minute frequency during peak times. This option comes with significant capital costs and is the least aggressive alternative. Stakeholders have told the MBTA that Alternative One is not ambitious and visionary enough. The other alternatives cost more but have significantly greater benefits. Alternative Six is the most aggressive. Instead of having an inner core versus outer core CR system, Alternative Six envisions a large rail network with multiple hubs. All the alternatives can be seen on the [Rail Vision website](#).

S. Peterson will provide the MassDOT board with an analysis of ridership for each alternative, including projected reductions in vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) and emissions. The project team will use these data to develop operating and capital cost estimates. To analyze the alternatives, the team utilized the Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) simulation model, the same tool the MBTA uses to build CR schedules today. This tool helps to determine whether projected aggressive levels of service are feasible with the right mix of capital investments. The team is also using the Regional Dynamic (RD) Model to help understand how running certain services might change the attractiveness of certain parts of the network for development. The team has heard a lot from stakeholders about development effects. Unlike the MPO's in-house regional travel demand model, the RD Model can help the team see how housing and development might shift in the region in response to certain decisions about service frequency.

S. Hamwey stated that the team is exploring different ways to communicate the capital investment needs in order to deliver each alternative.

The results of these analyses for the first three alternatives will be presented to the project Advisory Committee, the MassDOT board, and the MBTA's Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) in July. The results for the remaining four alternatives will be presented in September. The September meeting will also feature a visit from staff of Toronto's rail network. Toronto is undergoing a dramatic rail transformation project and can help the MBTA team understand how to implement an

aggressive transformation plan. By the end of 2019, the goal is for the boards to agree on a recommended vision.

Discussion

E. Bourassa stated that MAPC's Travis Pollack is on the Rail Vision Advisory Committee. E. Bourassa asked whether the team would compare the alternatives to investments in other transit modes, such as making the same amount of capital investment to double bus service.

S. Hamwey responded that it is beyond the scope of Rail Vision to consider other modes, adding that the FMCB and MassDOT boards are also viewing presentations on improved bus service and other expansion ideas.

E. Bourassa stated that it would be helpful and important to be able to compare those other alternatives.

S. Hamwey added that CR has a relatively low share of the overall MBTA customer base, about 10 percent. However, the MBTA cares about reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips and emissions, and trying to more equitably spread the benefits of the MBTA service.

P. Regan asked whether the team had looked at examples from other rail networks.

S. Hamwey responded that the team did a peer systems review at the beginning of the process, looking at domestic and European systems. The biggest takeaway was that rail systems with the highly aggressive levels of service, that advocacy groups want, tend to have very different land use patterns. In contrast to Toronto, the Boston region has satellite cities that are very dense, but then transitions into lower density suburbia, instead of a gradual change from urban, suburban, to rural.

Jay Monty (At-Large City) (City of Everett) asked how the alternatives might relieve crowding at rapid transit stations, and whether the MBTA might build infill stations.

S. Hamwey responded that there could be three different types of infill stations. One would serve CR connections with good highway access. A second type would create new connections from CR to rapid transit, for example to connect the Newbury/Rockport Line to Wonderland Station. The third type is the Grand Junction at Kendall Square, which would create a connection from the Worcester Line to North Station. There are other parts of the network where, if the ultimate vision is an urban rail approach, infill stations would make sense.

Daniel Amstutz (At-Large Town) (Town of Arlington) asked if the team had researched the downstream effects of shorter headways in dense areas. At West Medford, for

example, roads become congested when the CR is crossing due to the at-grade crossing. S. Hamwey acknowledged this issue but stated that the model is probably not sophisticated enough to tell the team what is happening at the local level.

Laura Gilmore (Massachusetts Port Authority) asked whether the evaluation weighs each alternative equally. S. Hamwey responded that the team would present all the options, focusing on likely outcomes of investments. In response to public comment, the team is including a fare policy competitive with bus and rapid transit in one of the alternatives. The team also worked with S. Peterson to relieve parking constraints in the model to help understand how much parking to build or how many more people would need to access stations without cars to achieve high levels of ridership.

K. Miller (FHWA) asked if the team would reevaluate the need for 15-minute headways in both directions in the outer reaches of the system. K. Miller asked if planning for frequent service throughout the line artificially inflates the cost. S. Hamwey responded that the team heard clearly from stakeholders, including mayors, elected officials, and town managers, that the communities farther from the inner core need frequent service. S. Hamwey stated that these stakeholders would argue that the lack of demand is a result of poor service. K. Miller asked about ridership estimates with the inclusion of Grand Junction. D. Mohler responded that Grand Junction would be modeled in Alternatives Three, Five, and Six, the alternatives with system electrification.

P. Regan inquired about cost estimates. S. Hamwey stated that, where appropriate, estimates were based on today's practices and fleet. The electric alternatives have operating costs that are typically lower. These estimates were developed considering information from comparable domestic services. The presentation to the FMCB and the MassDOT board will include estimates.

12. Public Comments and Draft MPO Responses on the FFYs 2020-24 TIP—Matt Genova, MPO Staff

M. Genova presented a summary of public comments received regarding the FFYs 2020-24 TIP, trends over time, and outreach methods.

Public comments can be seen in Appendix C of the TIP document, divided into sections for those received during TIP development and those received during the formal public review period. The comments are further grouped by topic. MPO responses are included in the final TIP document and sent directly to commenters. The MPO board was provided with draft responses to comments made during this year's process. In these responses, MPO staff highlighted where investments have been made, answered any questions, and followed up with commenters by email and phone. M. Genova

stated that he hopes to make time this summer to connect commenters who have specific project-level concerns with municipal or MassDOT staff who can address those concerns.

The MPO received 133 comments in total. Fifty-nine percent were received during TIP development. Elected and municipal officials were the most active commenters, submitting the majority of comments. A majority of comments received are in written form. Others are provided in person at MPO meetings.

M. Genova noted that comments are largely driven by project-specific concerns—92% of all comments concerned specific projects or groups of projects. The MPO received 30 comments on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail project (#608164), the most popular subject of discussion in the comments. Some other comments related to TIP process concerns and potential document corrections. M. Genova organized comments by MAPC subregion. The Inner Core Committee and Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) subregions delivered the most comments. There were some comments from stakeholders who represent the Boston region as a whole, such as MassDOT, and advocacy groups, including LivableStreets.

Only one comment from the public (not affiliated with a municipality, elected official, or advocacy group) was received during TIP development. The general public is more engaged during the official public review period. Two thirds of comments received during the official public review period were from the public.

The number of comments received by the MPO has changed over time. In 2015 and 2017, there was no data collected on whether a comment was received during TIP development or the public review period. The first year that oral comments from MPO meetings were included in the final TIP document was 2018, as recommended by federal guidance. In 2016, the MPO received 146 comments on the Green Line Extension and 118 comments on the Reconstruction of Highland Avenue in Needham and Newton. These two projects accounted for over half of the comments the MPO received in that year. In 2017, the MPO received 160 comments on the Reconstruction of Route 126 (Pond Street) in Ashland, which drove the number of comments significantly higher. Compared to other years, the FFY 2020-24 development process did not have a particular project that drove up the number of comments.

MPO staff conducted in-person and online public outreach. For digital outreach, the MPO sent emails and tweeted to encourage people to comment on the plan or come to various outreach events. Staff posted updates to the website and directed people to the

public comment form. MPO staff attended three events during the formal public review period. Discussion

T. Teich commented that the Advisory Council, as stated in its comment letter, is very interested in engagement, particularly in a year like this when there were last minute changes to the document. T. Teich stated that the timing of these changes made it hard to communicate to the public and get feedback in a timely manner. T. Teich shared her appreciation of the recap and wondered if staff have come up with any strategies for outreach moving forward. T. Teich stated that an effective strategy is to engage people where they are instead of expecting them to come to you. T. Teich acknowledged time and budget constraints but reiterated that this is one strategy for changing engagement outcomes.

M. Genova responded by reiterating that staff are brainstorming outreach strategies for the summer and fall and looking to stakeholder groups in the region in order to tap into networks and build relationships. MPO staff hope to work with these groups to spread the word about the TIP and the MPO process in general. Building those relationships in the near term will create a more robust network of groups to help staff disseminate this information as they approach next year's process.

M. Genova noted that while traditionally project scoring starts in late December and early January, staff would like to explore the possibility of beginning that process earlier. When the initial scores are done, MPO staff would have more time to do outreach for feedback on initial evaluations before programming discussions begin.

T. Teich expressed support for these ideas, adding that MPO staff should work to make the MPO process meaningful to the specific groups they are speaking to. Different aspects of the MPO process will be meaningful to different groups. T. Teich noted that the Advisory Council is very interested in the scoring process. More time to review scores could allow more people to have the opportunity to be involved in the process.

M. Genova stated that staff will want to hear from stakeholders about how the information should be presented for a lay audience.

D. Amstutz stated that he would be curious to know which community groups staff is engaging with. There are advocacy and advisory groups that have a focus on transportation, but there are other groups that are not in that niche that also engage in the transportation process. D. Amstutz noted that comments may largely come from municipal officials because constituents with concerns express those to their municipal officials and not the MPO. M. Genova agreed that there is an assumption that residents are engaged on the municipal level, but it is hard for staff to know to what degree that is

true. MPO staff are trying to strategize around how they best fit into the broader landscape of public engagement around infrastructure in the region and where the MPO and staff can be a resource.

13. Presentation of MPO Staff Research Project: Ferry Inventory Update—Tom Humphrey, MPO Staff

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [Inventory of Ferry Boat and Other Passenger Water Transportation Services in Massachusetts in 2018 and 2019](#)

The objective of this project was to update the inventory of all ferryboat services in the Commonwealth to include all routes that provide point to point service. T. Humphrey reviewed the following ferry services, including route locations, operators, 2018 schedules, and vessels. T. Humphrey noted that ferry ridership is generally concentrated from late spring to early fall and very few routes run year round.

- Year-Round Boston Ferry Services
 - Hingham Shipyard to Rowes Wharf, Boston
 - Hingham Shipyard and Hull (Pemberton Point) to Logan Airport and Long Wharf, Boston
 - Charlestown Navy Yard to Long Wharf, Boston
 - Lovejoy Wharf to Fan Pier
- Seasonal Medium-Distance Transportation Routes from Boston
 - Salem, Blaney Street Wharf, to Long Wharf, Boston
 - Winthrop Town Landing and Squantum Point Park to Central Wharf, Boston
- Seasonal Service to Provincetown
 - World Trade Center, Boston, to MacMillan Pier, Provincetown
 - Long Wharf, Boston, to MacMillan Pier, Provincetown
 - Plymouth to Provincetown
 - Provincetown Long Point Shuttle
- Service to Martha's Vineyard
 - Woods Hole to Vineyard Haven and Oak Bluffs
 - Falmouth Inner Harbor to Oak Bluffs (Island Commuter)
 - Falmouth Inner Harbor to Oak Bluffs (Patriots Party Boats)
 - New Bedford to Oak Bluffs
 - Hyannis to Oak Bluffs
 - Nantucket to Oak Bluffs
 - Falmouth Inner Harbor to Edgartown
 - Edgartown to Chappaquiddick

- Quonset Point, Rhode Island, to Oak Bluffs
- New Jersey and New York City to Oak Bluffs and Nantucket
- Montauk, New York, to Oak Bluffs
- Menemsha to Aquinnah
- Service to Nantucket
 - Hyannis to Nantucket (Steamship Authority)
 - Hyannis to Nantucket (Hy-Line)
 - Harwich Port to Nantucket
 - New Bedford to Nantucket
- Service to Cuttyhunk
 - New Bedford to Cuttyhunk (Scheduled Service)
 - New Bedford to Cuttyhunk (Water Taxi Service)
- Service to Boston Harbor Islands
 - Boston to Spectacle Island and Georges Island
 - Hingham to Harbor Islands
 - Boston to Thompson Island
 - Winthrop and Quincy to Spectacle Island
- Boston Harbor Water Taxis
 - BHC Water Taxi
 - Rowes Wharf Water Transport
 - Boston Harbor Shuttle
 - ICA Watershed Ferry
- North Shore Water Shuttles
 - Gloucester Harbor Water Shuttle
 - Salem Harbor Shuttle
- Other Routes Implemented After 2013
 - Fall River, Massachusetts, to Newport and Block Island, Rhode Island
- Routes Implemented After 2013 But Not Operated in 2018
 - Lynn to Boston
 - Boston Inner Harbor – Fan Pier to New England Aquarium

Discussion

Dennis Giombetti (MetroWest Regional Collaborative) (City of Framingham) stated that the South Shore struggles with congestion and inquired about plans for extended ferry service to Plymouth from Hingham. T. Humphrey replied that ferry services are not generally competitive with vehicles because ferries travel at lower speeds. Ferries are competitive when the distance across water is much shorter than land, such as the distance between Boston to Provincetown.

14.Members' items

There were none.

15.Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway) (G. Trindade) and seconded by the MBTA Advisory Board (P. Regan). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
At-Large Town (Town of Lexington)	Richard Canale
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department)	Tom Kadzis Ken Miller Amy Sullivan
Federal Highway Administration	
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	David Mohler Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Samantha Silverberg
Massachusetts Port Authority	Laura Gilmore
MBTA Advisory Board	Paul Regan
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Bedford)	Rick Reed
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Aaron Clausen
North Suburban Planning Council (City of Woburn)	Tina Cassidy
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Tegin Teich
South Shore Coalition (Town of Braintree)	
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	Glenn Trindade
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Uma Shama	Bridgewater State University
Timothy Paris	MassDOT Highway District 4
Sara Scully	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
Larry Harman	Bridgewater State University
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Maxwell Huber	MassDOT
Madison McGlinchey	MassDOT
Steve Olanoff	TRIC Alternate
Matthew Falkenstein	MBTA Advisory Board
Wig Zamore	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Annette Demchur, Co-Interim Executive Director
Scott Peterson, Co-Interim Executive Director
Róisín Foley
Hiral Gandhi
Matt Genova
Tom Humphrey
Alexandra (Ali) Kleyman
Anne McGahan
Katie Pincus-Stetner
Bradley Putnam
Kate White
